

# Bringing home the Blanchard



Photo by Capt. Eric Chin

Maj. Brian Rico, 90th Maintenance Operations Squadron and Guardian Challenge team mascot, gets the crowd motivated at the GC team send off May 19.



Photo by Capt. Eric Chin

Maj. Lloyd Buzzzell, 90th Operations Support Squadron and Guardian Challenge project officer for the wing, sprays a team of missileers including Capt. Frank McDermott, 90 OG and GC competitor, with a hose in celebration of the end of GC missile operator and maintenance competitions May 19 in front of the 90 OG building here.



Photo by Senior Airman Tessa Cubbon

Col. Michael Fortney, 90th Operations Group commander, greets members of the 2006 Guardian Challenge team May 19 as they arrive at the 90 OG building for their competitions after the GC send-off.

## GC underway at Warren

**Airman 1st Class Connor Elayan**  
90th Space Wing Public Affairs

Although the 2006 Guardian Challenge final score posting and security forces competition at Peterson AFB, Colo., isn't until August, the rest of the competitions are well underway at Warren.

Missile operations and maintenance teams competed and were evaluated here on base May 19 while the 37th Helicopter Squadron and helicopter teams from Malmstrom AFB, Mont., Minot AFB, N.D., and Vandenberg AFB, Calif., competed at Camp Guernsey, Wyo., May 10.

The 38th Air Force Space Command space and missile warfighter competition was cancelled last year but is back now with a few changes.

In the past, all competitions were held at Vandenberg. This year the venue has moved to Peterson, but only for the security forces teams; Operations and maintenance teams battle at their home station while helicopter teams compete at Camp Guernsey.

This change of venue creates unique logistical challenges,

said Maj. Lloyd Buzzzell, 90th Operations Support Squadron and Guardian Challenge project officer for the wing.

"This is a new experience for us," he said. "It is a challenge this year because the venue is changed from where it has been held in the past."

Another change to this year's competition is that several teams, including missile chefs and code controllers, will not be competing.

"We had to shave numbers to have a competition this year," said Major Buzzzell. "The competition needed to be scaled down so we could focus on the core aspect of Guardian Challenge."

Preparation for this year's competition began in September 2005, and teams have been training hard.

"These guys are so much more prepared than any team I have ever seen," said Col. Michael Fortney, 90th Operations Group commander. "Confidence is high."

This nod from the top didn't go unnoticed.

"Leadership has been a huge support," said Major Buzzzell. "We are very thankful to the group commanders and Col. (Michael) Carey (90 SW commander)."

Although the base strongly supports the Guardian Challenge team, support extends beyond the base gates. The Air Force Association, the Military Affairs Committee and Corral West all sponsor Team Warren.

"The sponsors have worked with us for many years," said Major Buzzzell. "They help our team represent the city of Cheyenne."

With support at home squared away, Team Warren now has one goal in mind: Return home with the coveted Blanchard trophy.

The Blanchard Trophy is awarded to the Best ICBM Wing in the Air Force. Besides trophies in each discipline, other awards include the Aldridge Trophy for the Best Space Operations Wing Team and the Schriever Trophy for the Best Space Launch Wing Team.

Despite the allure of winning trophies and recognition, the hard work Team Warren put in is its own reward.

"When someone trains like the teams do, they develop better procedures for their area," said Major Buzzzell. "Guardian Challenge also gives us the opportunity to exhibit how good we are as a wing and a crew force."



Photo by Capt. Eric Chin

The Guardian Challenge electro-mechanical team shows off their rank at the GC send off May 19. As part of GC tradition, GC competitors like (left to right) Staff Sgt. Brett Tatem, Senior Airman Tyler Hare and Senior Airman Steven Rutledge confiscate the rank of officers on base and proudly display them on their GC hats.